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ABSTRACT

Ideas and suggestions relating to the teaching of reading comprehension are presented in this publication. The first chapter discusses the comprehension process and current issues and trends in comprehension research. The second chapter presents data from a statewide assessment program in Florida, in order to indicate strengths and weaknesses in the reading comprehension skills of Florida third and fifth graders. In chapters three and four, suggestions are provided for diagnosing students' reading needs and for following through with prescriptive lessons and activities. The final chapter describes 30 learning activities to aid in the teaching of ten comprehension skills. The publication includes an eleven-item bibliography of publications that deal with reading instruction, a list of suggested reading tests, and an eight-item annotated bibliography of suggested resources to aid in teaching reading and language arts skills, individualizing instruction, and organizing learning centers. (GW)

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RESEARCH BULLETIN

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IMPROVING READING COMPREHENSION SKILLS

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FOREWORD

Back to basics is a phrase often heard/read and hard to escape from today. Teachers at all grade levels are being pressured to improve the basic skills of their students. The basic skill of reading continues to receive constant attention in professional and lay publications. It is not too difficult to find articles/books on "why," "if," and "how" Johnny can/cannot read. One of the key complaints emerging from all these materials is concerned with comprehension - can the student get meaning from the printed page? If we accept the national, state, and private testing company test results, students are having problems with reading comprehension.

In this publication the authors have presented ideas and practical approaches which teachers can use to help improve reading comprehension. Improving comprehension is a neverending task, one that needs to be done if students are to succeed throughout their school life.

We congratulate Drs. Turner and Fey on a job well done.

W. F. Breivogel
Guest Editor
Fall, 1977

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Reading is the single most important skill taught in schools. It is essential to all other types of learning. Although most children learn to read, it is no simple matter, as any teacher can tell.

A reader who cannot comprehend what he reads is not reading. The goal of reading is to understand printed symbols. Without this skill, a student has not successfully attained the criterion of reading. Our purpose for writing this monograph is to assist teachers in helping their students reach this important goal. We hope to accomplish this purpose by improving teachers' understanding of the comprehension process and requisite skills, and by suggesting activities to teach these skills. We are assuming that the teacher already understands and can teach the decoding process, so our aim will be strictly comprehension.

Learning to read involves four increasingly complex stages: readiness, initial mastery, comprehension, and power. Students must pass through each of these stages, beginning at the readiness stage when they enter school. Their subsequent progress depends on the length of time it takes them to master the necessary skills at each level.

Teachers are concerned with all the reading stages. Primary teachers emphasize work with the readiness stage and the initial mastery stage. At these stages, the students concentrate on building the necessary fundamental skills and developing more specific decoding skills. Basics of the comprehension stage are also taught by the primary teacher. It is at the comprehension stage that students must first be concerned with combining several different skills: putting symbols together and extracting meaning. The last stage, the power stage, is primarily refinement of the comprehension skills.

Comprehension

Because comprehension is the cornerstone of reading, it is essential that teachers have a thorough understanding of the comprehension process. Yet, research has not been very helpful in this matter. Various researchers have tried to identify the subskills that make up the comprehension process. Davis, in 1944, identified nine subskills. He later reaffirmed eight of these skills (Davis, 1968). Carroll identified five major skills. These are:

1. remembering word meanings
2. analyzing the structure of a passage
3. finding answers to questions answered explicitly or in paraphrase
4. recognizing a writer's purpose, attitude, and tone or mood
5. drawing inferences from the content

(Carroll, 1972). We recommend to the reader a list of skills presented by the Florida Department of Education that are tested by the Statewide Assessment tests. Nine comprehension skills objectives are tested at the third-grade level and twenty skill objectives are tested at the fifth-grade level (see Section 3).

This monograph has incorporated some of the comprehension skills presented and then suggested some activities to teach objectives.

Issues and Trends In Reading Comprehension

Researchers have considered this skill of comprehension to be complex and confusing in identifying the definite steps to mastering the skill. "Research has not been very helpful to teachers in this matter of comprehension. We still know next to nothing about the process, even though we are continually devising new measures of whatever it is" (Early, 1976). As a result of this uncertainty, there are a variety of opinions as to what comprehension is and how it should be taught. One point that all researchers do agree with is the fact that comprehension is the ultimate goal of the "learning to read" process.

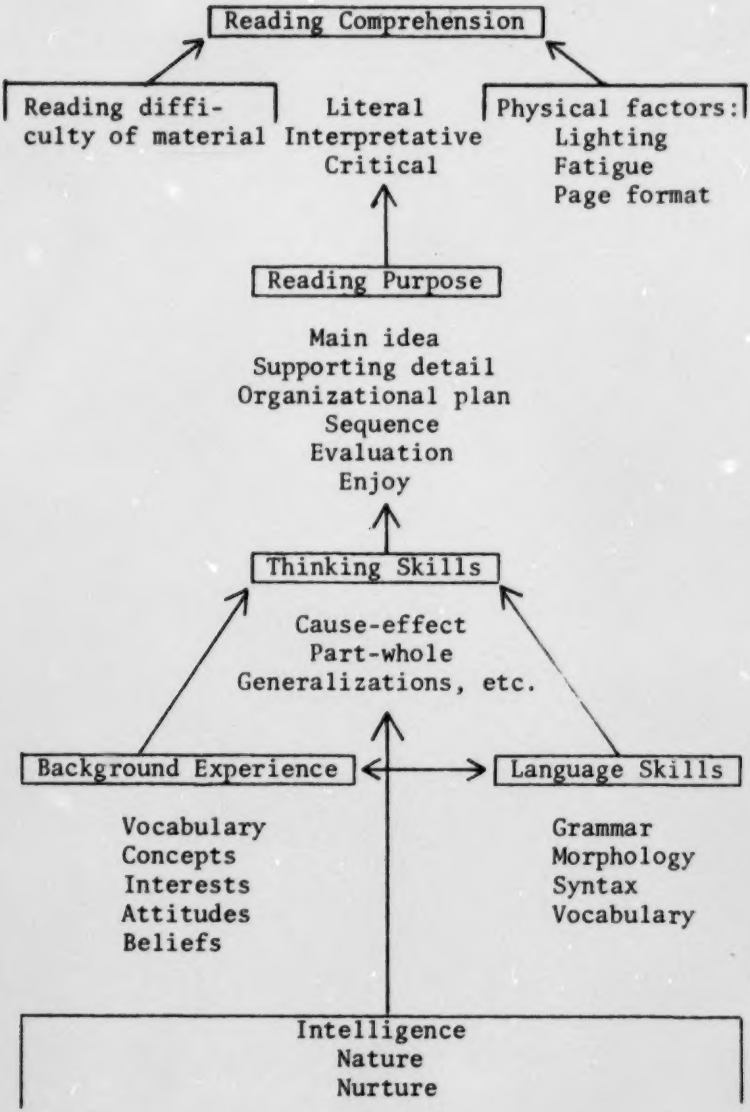
Smith states that "Comprehension is just a big blanket term that covers a whole area of the thought-getting process in reading" (Smith, 1963). This "big blanket" has caused many researchers to attempt to isolate the subskills in the teaching of comprehension. Boning provides an entire kit

with workbooks designed to develop each of eight different subskills. They include: following directions; using the context; getting the main idea; locating the answer; working with sounds; drawing conclusions; getting the facts; and detecting the sequence (Boning, 1973). In reviewing the literature on comprehension, we can devise a list of anywhere from 5 to 40 different subskills involved in teaching comprehension. Some of these may overlap due to semantics of the authors.

Some researchers believe that comprehension involves the entire thought process. Harris states that "Four factors are involved as the primary determinants of reading comprehension: thinking skills; background experience; language skills; and intelligence" (Harris, 1972). Reading comprehension in Harris's opinion involves the whole child. He has developed a chart which explains his theory. Figure 1 depicts factors which affect comprehension (Harris, 1972)

Gans arrived at a very sound conclusion as a result of her study of critical reading. "Reading is not a simple mechanical skill, nor is it a narrow scholastic tool. Properly cultivated it is essentially a thoughtful process" (Gans, 1940). Thorndike states that "Home and family background are dominant in determining achievement in reading" (Thorndike, 1973). "The factors influencing comprehension may for convenience be arranged into three categories: those inherent in the material being used; the characteristic of the reader, himself; and the influences dependent upon the manner of reading"(Spache, 1973).

Figure 1


Reading Comprehension
Reading difficulty of material
Literal
Interpretative
Critical
Physical factors:
Lighting
Fatigue
Page format
Reading Purpose
Main idea
Supporting detail
Organizational plan
Sequence
Evaluation
Enjoy
Thinking Skills
Cause-effect
Part-whole
Generalizations, etc.
Background Experience
Language Skills
Vocabulary
Concepts
Interests
Attitudes
Beliefs
Grammar
Morphology
Syntax
Vocabulary
Intelligence
Nature
Nurture

One other theory for the success or failure of the comprehension skill is the effect of the teacher. The teacher must provide the motivation, the background, the decoding skills, and finally, the proper type of questions for comprehension. "Comprehension is affected even more, however, by the pattern of questions the child learns to anticipate. He learns to read with only those types of thinking that the teachers' questions demand" (Spache, 1973). Teachers who do ask questions of students based on the material read, too often ask simple recall questions. It is easier for students to remember names or specific details than to answer inferential, creative, or evaluative questions. They may be recalling rather than comprehending, so their reading problems go undetected. Just as reading comprehension is more than recall, questions should be more than just factual.

We can see after reviewing the literature on comprehension, there is no set formula that will insure comprehension on the part of the reader. We must continue to question this entire area and use whatever method brings success to our students.

CHAPTER 2

DATA FROM THE FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION STATEWIDE ASSESSMENT PROGRAM

The purpose of the Florida Statewide Assessment Program is to measure the students' ability to master the basic communication and mathematics skills. This program identifies the skills mastered as well as those which are deficient. The information is then presented to the school districts and then to the individual schools so that they can identify their strengths and weaknesses.

The Assessment Program measures a wide range of mathematics and communication basic skills. "The objectives identify the minimal skills virtually all Florida students should acquire, rather than those skills a majority of students should attain at a grade" (Statewide Assessment Program, 1977). The basic skills tested in the communication section include word processing skills, comprehension skills, and critical writing skills. The Assessment Program can be used as a valuable tool to identify specific comprehension deficiencies.

The 1976-77 tests involved all students in the State of Florida in grades three and five, excluding those students who were physically and mentally handicapped. The tests were administered in October, 1976. The communication skills were administered on the first day, and the mathematics skills were administered on the second day.

Results of the Florida Assessment Program

Grade 3. Of the 19 objectives tested in the communications section, 9 were identified by the author as comprehension skills. The 9 comprehension objectives are listed in the Table below according to degree of difficulty with the most difficult listed first. The first column indicates the percentage of third-graders who mastered the skill.

Figure 1: THIRD GRADE COMPREHENSION OBJECTIVES TESTED - Statewide Assessment Test, October, 1976

Percentage	Objective
38	Determine similar meaning of sentences
59	Identify irrelevant statements
65	Identify story outcome
70	Distinguish between real and unreal statements
74	Identify specific details in a selection
74	Determine the stated effect of an action
85	Follow a two-step written direction
93	Associate printed words with oral equivalents
94	Follow two-step oral directions

Grade 5. Of the 37 objectives tested in the fifth-grade communications section, 20 were identified by the author as comprehension skills. These twenty comprehension objectives are listed in the Table below according to degree of difficulty with the most difficult listed first. The first column indicates the percentage of fifth-graders who mastered the skill.

Figure 2: FIFTH GRADE COMPREHENSION OBJECTIVES TESTED - Statewide Assessment Test, October, 1976

Percentage	Objective
27	Distinguish between facts and opinions
51	Determine appropriate conclusions
54	Follow three-step written directions
58	Determine the main idea within a paragraph
59	Determine order of details in a selection
60	Associate inflected words with a context
61	Identify unsupported conclusions
62	Determine similar meaning of sentences
70	Determine similar meaning of paragraphs
71	Identify irrelevant statements

Percentage	Objective
71	Follow three-step oral directions
72	List steps necessary to complete an activity
77	Determine word meaning by context clues
77	Identify story outcomes
79	Determine stated cause of an action
80	Associate compound words with their components
80	Associate words with synonyms and antonyms
81	Distinguish between real and un-eal
88	Find specific information in a selection
94	Associate printed words with oral equivalents

The data presented clearly indicate the areas which provide little difficulty for most students as well as the areas which have not been mastered by the majority of students. At this point, we must also keep in mind that these are the minimal skills.

For the purpose of our analysis of these data we used criteria of 80-100% score as a skill which had been mastered. By this standard, on the third-

grade level, six comprehension skills had not been mastered. On the fifth-grade level, 15 of the 20 basic comprehension skills had not been mastered. These facts indicate that there is a need to emphasize these basic skills not only on the third-grade levels, but also on all grade levels.

Figure 3: GRADE THREE COMPREHENSION SKILL DEFICIENCIES

1. Determine similar meaning of sentences
2. Identify irrelevant statements
3. Identify story outcome
4. Distinguish between real and unreal statements
5. Identify specific details in a selection
6. Determine the stated effect of an action

Figure 4: GRADE FIVE COMPREHENSION SKILL DEFICIENCIES

1. Distinguish between facts and opinions
2. Determine appropriate conclusions
3. Follow three-step written directions

4. Determine the main idea within a paragraph
5. Determine order of details in a selection
6. Associate inflected words with a context
7. Identify unsupported conclusions
8. Determine similar meaning of sentences
9. Determine similar meaning of paragraphs
10. Identify irrelevant statements
11. Follow three-step oral directions
12. List steps necessary to complete an activity
13. Determine word meaning by context clues
14. Identify story outcomes
15. Determine stated cause of an action

With these results it should be more efficient for teachers to "zero in" on the areas of comprehensive deficiency as exemplified by the Florida Statewide Assessment Test. Teachers may now emphasize certain areas that they might not have emphasized before. It is intended that by looking at the items listed it gives teachers directions in which to teach.

It also tells teachers the strengths of the pupils and the area where effective teaching has been done.

> The Florida Statewide Assessment Program is embarking upon its seventh year of assessing students in selected grades and subject areas. The overall goal of the program is to provide data for decision makers. The end product should be improved educational programs for all Florida students. (Statewide Assessment Program, 1977).

CHAPTER 3

SUGGESTIONS FOR DIAGNOSIS

Before attempting to teach comprehension skills, the teacher must know each student's instructional level and independent reading level.

The independent reading level is that level where the material is easy for him to read. For example, he can pronounce 99% of the words presented and, given comprehension questions, answers 90% correctly.

The instructional reading level is the level where the material is challenging to the child. For example, he can pronounce 95% of the words presented and, given some comprehension questions, answers 75% correctly (Betts, 1954).

Developing An Informal Reading Inventory

We suggest that teachers use an informal reading inventory to assist them in identifying students' problem areas.

At the same time, we suggest that the teachers keep in mind Barrett's (1972) "Taxonomy of Reading Comprehension." Barrett lists four general areas of comprehension: literal, inferential, evaluative, and appreciative. Most questions in reading exercises fall into these categories. Barrett subdivides these four areas into more specific objectives, e.g., inferring supporting details; inferring the main idea; inferring sequence and

inferring the main idea; inferring sequence, and others.

We ask teachers to keep these categories in mind when they develop an informal reading inventory.

The first part of an informal reading inventory consists of graded paragraphs chosen from a basal reading series. The second part is a list of questions to evaluate the reader's comprehension of these paragraphs. Since we are dealing with comprehension, we assume that a child is able to decode adequately and can read some of the paragraphs. After listening to the student read, the teacher decides whether the student needs more work in decoding or in comprehension.

The following list of directions suggests how to develop an informal reading inventory.

1. Gathering the materials

    a. Choose a basal series of readers. Any standard well graded system which begins at the first-grade level and continues through the sixth-grade level or higher is acceptable.

2. Choosing the selections

    a. Choose a selection that contains a complete idea

b. Choose selections of about 25-40 words at the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd-grade level.

c. In books 4, 5, and 6, choose longer selections of 60-100 words. Choose these selections from the center of the book.

3. Build the questions

a. Build five questions on 1st, 2nd-grade levels. Build six questions at other levels.

b. Avoid questions requiring "yes" and "no" answers.

c. For example, it is important for the teacher to develop one or two questions in the general areas defined by Barrett's Taxonomy. Examples: Literal Question (after reading a paragraph on Columbus). When did Columbus discover America? Inferential Question: (After reading a paragraph on states in the northeast). If it snows in New York state, and Vermont is a neighbor of New York state, what might you predict about the weather in Vermont? Evaluative Question: Could the story you read have really taken place?

d. Be sure questions require comprehension of ideas rather than pure recalling of words. For example, the student answers, "neighboring New York state," but when asked what neighboring means, he does not understand.

e. Vary the vocabulary in the questions from the vocabulary in the text he is reading.

For those teachers who wish, there are Oral Reading Tests such as the Gray Oral Reading Test (Gray, 1967) and the Gilmore Oral Reading Test (Gilmore, 1968). These are used in the same manner as the Informal Reading Inventory.

Procedure for Testing

The teacher should provide a setting where the student is at ease. A simple statement such as, "I want to learn something about your reading so that we can work on it," would be sufficient in most cases. Try to treat the situation as informally as possible. Then tell the student that he is going to read some paragraphs silently. As he finishes each paragraph, turn the paper face down and ask him some questions. The questions are those you have developed which point the areas noted above.

Scoring

Incorrect answers are noted for each grouping of five or six questions. If he misses two or more questions this would be his instructional level. The type of question he misses is also noted, be it literal, inferential, or evaluative.

If the teacher is unhappy with this informal procedure or wishes a more accurate diagnosis, he may want to use the comprehension section from reading achievement tests and spend time analyzing the items. The Stanford Achievement Test and the Metropolitan Achievement Test (see Appendix) have sections dealing with comprehension. The Gates-MacGinitie Test is also highly recommended (Gates, 1964).

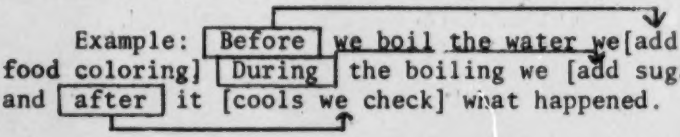
If you have administered any of the recommended tests or the informal Reading Inventory, you should know the approximate comprehension grade level of each student in your class as well as the general areas of difficulty. If you have made an indepth item analysis, you would also have more specific information. With this specific information, we can help you provide some help to your students with specific suggestions in Section 5.

CHAPTER 4

AFTER DIAGNOSIS - WHAT

Many teachers spend time diagnosing reading problems, but then neglect to follow through with adequate and sufficient prescriptive lessons or activities. Identification of reading difficulties is useful only when instruction is tailored to meet the needs of the students. A dittoed exercise or a suggested activity is reinforcement for a skill which has been taught, not a substitution for instruction. We recommend an instructional method of diminishing crutches and highlighting. For example, the teacher would place a square around a key word to give the child a signal that this was a word that she/he needs to be particularly aware of. It will help find the answer. Gradually, she would reduce the square as an aid until the child has no help with finding what she asked for.

Example: In a specific lesson denoting sequence of events, there are certain key words which help children tell the order of what happened, three of which are before ---, during ---, and after ---. These words are signals that tell us what happens 1st, 2nd, or 3rd. In the first example in a paragraph, the teacher would square or circle the words. This is highlighting the clues.


Example: Before we boil the water we [add the food coloring] During the boiling we [add sugar] and after it [cools we check] what happened.

Then the teacher would list the sequence of events:

1. add food color
2. add sugar
3. cooling - check

In the second example, the teacher would only underline the key words and call on children to help her list the sequence on the blackboard.

In the third paragraph, the teacher would simply show the paragraph and let the children list the sequence of events. If further teaching would be necessary, repeat the procedures. The skill sequence would look something like this:

Lesson for Teaching
Sequence of Events

Objective: Given 4 short paragraphs containing key words signaling sequence, the student will list the order of events correctly in 3 out of 4 stories.

Directing Attention: Look at the key words before, after, and during. Teacher points to them in paragraph on the blackboard, or an overhead projector.

Presentation:

1. Present paragraph with key words squared and the numbers 1, 2, and 3 above them.

2. Ask what came 1st; 2nd; 3rd.

3. Erase key words and ask same questions as above.

4. Repeat with another paragraph.

5. Repeat with fewer clues.

6. Let children do alone.

Practice: Give paragraph to children and ask them to list order of events.

Posttest: Work sheet with four short paragraphs, the student will list the order of events correctly in 3 out of 4 stories.

CHAPTER 5

30 SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES TO PRACTICE 10 COMPREHENSION SKILLS

We have developed a group of suggested activities that help teach ten comprehension skills previously identified by the Statewide Assessment Program. We would like to remind teachers again that the activities in themselves do not teach. Teachers need to present information first using the various strategies presented and then develop activities to supplement and reinforce what has been taught.

The bibliography at the conclusion of this section lists books that can also add to the teacher's repertoire of activities as well as some suggested tests. Another bibliography lists reading textbooks that would also be helpful.

I. Sequence of Events

A. The Reading Process. Each group of words is a part of a sentence: a beginning, a middle, or a last part. When you put them in the right order, they make a sentence. In each box you are to put 1 in front of the first part, 2 in front of the middle part, and 3 in front of the last part of the sentence.

Example: (1) 1 Friday was the day
3 on her vacation
2 that Miss Spruce started

(2)___clear the table
___Patty helped
___and wash the dishes

(3)___and disappeared
___the starving beast
___leaped from the cage

(4)___these new books in the right order
___on the new bookshelf"
___Ruth said, "I'm going to put

(5)___so that the bee would fly out
___the window of the bus
___Mr. Hunter was going to raise

B. Ask students to bring in their favorite comic strips from the newspaper. Collect these for several days. Cut the comic strips into individual frames and place in envelopes. Give these to students and allow them to arrange the pieces to tell a story.

C. Prepare short stories in which the numbered sentences are out of order. Pupils are directed to rearrange the sentences so they are in proper order.

Example: (1) The strange man walked to the door and rapped.

(2) The man was invited into the house.

(3) The dog barked when he heard the sound.

(4) The lady of the house went to the door and opened it.

Correct answers can appear on the back of the exercise, making this a potentially self-directed activity.

II. Story Detail

A. Mount a detailed picture on a piece of cardboard. In an accompanying envelope, provide pupils with three by five cards on which individual paragraphs about the picture have been typed and numbered. Pupils are directed to find the paragraph which gives the most accurate details about the picture.

B. Provide students with a series of paragraphs in each of which a nonsensical phrase has been inserted. Pupils are directed to read each paragraph carefully and detect the absurd phrase.

C. Have students read several paragraphs each describing a different character. Have students select the character they like best and list the words found in the paragraph that describe

him. Have a student read his list of words and see if classmates can identify the character.

III. Cause or Effect

A. Prepare or select several long paragraphs which describe several events that result in the occurrence of a final event. Ask the student to determine what happened to cause the final event.

Example: Charlie left for work late one morning because the alarm clock didn't ring. Being late caused him to hurry and he slipped on the sidewalk and twisted his ankle. At work he spilled his coffee on some very important papers and the boss was angry. On the way home that evening, Charlie was caught in the rain and his new shirt faded on his pants. When Charlie got home he kicked the cat.

Question: What happened that made Charlie kick the cat?

B. Select or prepare several short paragraphs in which there is a final act. Ask the students to explain why the final act occurred.

Example: Jack skipped out of the house and ran to his favorite climbing tree. As he neared the top, a branch broke and he fell to the ground.

Question: What happened to make Jack fall?
(The branch broke.)

C. Find or make up several reasoning statements for the students and have them give the answers. Discuss any that students do not agree on or have no answer for.

Example: If there are clouds in the sky it may rain;

If there are no clouds in the sky it will not rain.

It is raining;
Therefore, There are clouds in the sky.

IV. Inference

1. Select or prepare several sentences for each student. For each sentence provide three or four alternative answers, one of which is most likely based on the sentence.

Example: The Applegates lived near the ocean in the eastern part of the United States. They lived near the - Atlantic Ocean; Pacific Ocean; Indian Ocean

2. Begin reading a story to the class but stop before completing it. Provide students with several possible endings and discuss which one is best and why.

3. Select or prepare several paragraphs for students. For each paragraph, provide three or four questions which are not answered directly by the facts in the paragraph. Have students prepare answers for the questions.

Example: Henry flinched as he touched his bruised, swollen eye. He was angry at himself for not being more careful yesterday in practice. The first game of the season, and Henry stepped right in front of the pitcher's first throw!

(a) What happened to Henry?
(b) What kind of practice was it?

V. Conclusion

1. Give each child a slip of paper on which is written a job title and the

characteristics of that job. Each student describes to the class the characteristics of that job.

Example: I get up early. I wear overalls. I drive a tractor. I milk cows.

Job: A farmer

2. After students have read a story, supply them with several questions which have not been answered by the story. Have them supply answers to the questions and then discuss why they gave each answer. An example of a question might be:

   In the story we noted that the pioneers always carried water with them. Why did they do this?

3. Students participate in a class activity involving riddles. In these riddles only a few facts are given and students must ask yes or no questions to obtain enough facts to provide the answer to the riddles.

   Example: There is a man lying in an open field with a pack on his back. The question is: What can you determine about this situation?

VI. Main Idea

1. Have students write short news articles and then select titles for the articles which would be appropriate for newspaper headlines.

2. Designate a story or articles in a book to which pupils have access. Provide a series of key sentences, one from each paragraph. Pupils are instructed to find the paragraph from which each key sentence was taken.

3. Cut headings from three or four short articles. Place the headings in one envelope and the articles in another. Pupils are directed to match the headings with the proper articles.

VII. Mood

1. Provide students with large pieces of drawing paper and make crayons available but not yet distributed. Play an instrumental record for three to five minutes while students listen. Turn off the record player and allow students to choose crayons. Turn the record player back on and allow students to draw anything they feel like. At the end of an appropriate time, ask students to write how they feel on the back of their pictures. As students share their pictures with the class, the class tries to determine how the artist was feeling.

2. Have students collect pictures of faces from magazines and bring them to school. Put the pictures in a place where all of the students can see them and discuss how the person in picture might feel and how the person in it makes the student feel to look at the picture. Students may want to write stories about the people in the pictures.

3. Have students collect pictures of people from magazines. Give one picture to each student and ask him to write a short story about the picture. Collect the pictures and stories. Put the pictures on the bulletin board and then read a story and see if the students can guess which picture it is about. Do this for all of the stories and discuss each when students do not agree. This is an open-ended activity.

VIII. Time Span and Period

1. Prepare or select several paragraphs in which there are events that occur over different time lengths. Discuss the paragraphs with students and help them identify parts that indicate passage of time.

   Example: John and his family spent the morning loading the station wagon for the trip. After lunch they drove until sunset

and camped for the night in a wooded park. The next day they . . .. The underlined words help tell how long was spent on each activity.

2. Divide the class into groups of three to four students each. Assign each group the task of preparing a costume which represents a certain time in history. Each group also will write a story or description which tells about the people who wore the costume. When the presentation is made to the class, allow them to guess the time in history when the costume would have been worn.

3. Prepare or select several paragraphs which students can act out in 15-20 minutes. First have them read the story and then predict how long the action would really take. Allow several groups of students to act out the paragraphs and time them to determine how accurate their predictions were.

   Example: Billy walked to the front of the room and asked the teacher for a rubberband. Then he went to the pencil sharpener and stood there while he tied his shoes. Next, he put the rubberband around the pencil sharpener and went back to his seat.

IX. Fact and Opinion

1. Students collect and bring to class several advertisements from magazines and newspapers. In small groups have students select advertisements to discuss with the class. Analyze the advertisements to determine their validity.

2. After discussing with students the kinds of articles found in newspapers, have them bring to class two or three of each type discussed. Have students distinguish between articles that describe actual events and those that are the writer's ideas.

   Example: Report on a local bank robbery vs. editorial about litterbugs.

3. Show students a short film or part of a film in which an incident takes place. (An automobile accident, bank robbery, scene in a supermarket, etc.) Ask students to write about what they have seen. Discuss what they have written and then replay the film looking for things they have written about. Compare their descriptions with what actually happens in the film.

X. Author Purpose

1. Provide students with several types of books and articles (comics, cookbooks, science texts, fiction, history). Have them classify the books and articles as to why they were written.

2. Divide students into several small groups. Working together, each group prepares a short story to be read to the class. After hearing the story, members of the class try to determine the reason why the group wrote the story.

3. Provide students with several sets of paragraphs. In each set there are two paragraphs with the same main theme. One of the paragraphs in the set is written so as to provide the reader with factual information about the theme and the other tells a humorous story about the theme. Have the students read the paragraphs in each set and tell why each was written.

   Example: The theme might be raccoons. One paragraph gives facts about the raccoon and the other tells of humorous incidents when a raccoon gets into a camper's tent.

CONCLUSION

It is the intention of the authors to make this a practical guide for use by teachers in the elementary school. A discussion of current issues and trends in reading comprehension gives the readers a basic background. We looked at data from the Florida 1976 Statewide Assessment Tests and in our analysis placed emphasis on certain comprehension skills at grades 3 and 5. Suggestions for diagnosis and direct instruction were presented and finally, thirty suggested activities to practice comprehension skills were explained.

However, the ideas are only intended as samples. All good teachers need many ideas to use in teaching. The authors feel this is a starting list for teachers to use. The bibliography contains recommended sources for teachers who wish to develop additional examples.

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4300 West 62 Street
Indianapolis, Indiana 46206

Harcourt, Brace & Jovanovich, Inc.
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757 Third Avenue
New York, New York 10017

Teachers College Press
Teachers College
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This book is designed to provide teachers in the kindergarten and nursery school with creative activities to use with their pupils in the areas of language arts, science, social studies, math, art, and music. This includes four comprehension skills activities. 230 pages.

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This book contains hundreds of ideas developed to assist the teacher in providing independent and supervised individual instruction. The activities are organized by skills-auditory perception, visual-auditory perception, vocabulary extension and comprehension and oral language development. There are also chapters on readiness activities and independent activities. The author was a classroom teacher, remedial reading teacher, and curriculum specialist in Broward County, Florida. 120 pages.

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This book was developed as a guidebook providing step-by-step directions to help teachers use the learning center approach to individualized classroom instruction. It covers communication skills, environmental studies, quantitative studies. Each of the model learning centers presented contains performance objectives, list of materials needed, procedures for implementation, student activity sheets, illustrations, and a photograph of the center in use. 375 pages.

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This book suggests teaching methods and activities for reading to help teachers deal with individual differences among students with learning disabilities, behavioral problems, or related problems. The areas covered are discrimination, morals, phonics, language activities, directionality, communications, and activities just for fun. 237 pages.

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This book contains ideas for activity-centered learning in the areas of language and mathematics development. Perception, matching, classification, sounds, and letters are the general topics for language development, and sets, number sequences, combining and separating groups, and relationship are the mathematical concepts covered. Each activity includes page descriptions of getting started ideas for followup discussion and materials. The third section of the book discusses activity-centered learning: Why and How. 255 pages.

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SPICE was the first of the Educational Service handbook series and concentrates on language arts activities for the primary grades (K-4). The five major sections of this handbook are: phonics, structural analysis, reading for meaning, writing to convey meaning, and a miscellaneous section. There are 41 classroom activities in the reading for meaning section. Each activity description includes a list of all necessary materials and preparations and an example of how the activity can be presented to a class. 235 pages.

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This book provides information concerning learning center teaching. It maintains that learning centers are useful for adapting classroom teaching to match individual differences among students and provide appropriate personal learning experiences. This book was written because the author participated in objective and field approved analysis of Center Teaching. The three main sections of the book cover - basic concepts of center

teaching, teaching/learning relationship components, recycling learning centers. Objectives, materials, displays, directions, and recycle information are presented for the activities. 150 pages.